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The Commonweal

September 26, 1947

French Catholics and Communism

Robert Barrat

Mr. Bevin and Our Gold

R. Richard Wohl

The Work of the People

H. A. Reinhold

VOLUME XLVI

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NUMBER 24

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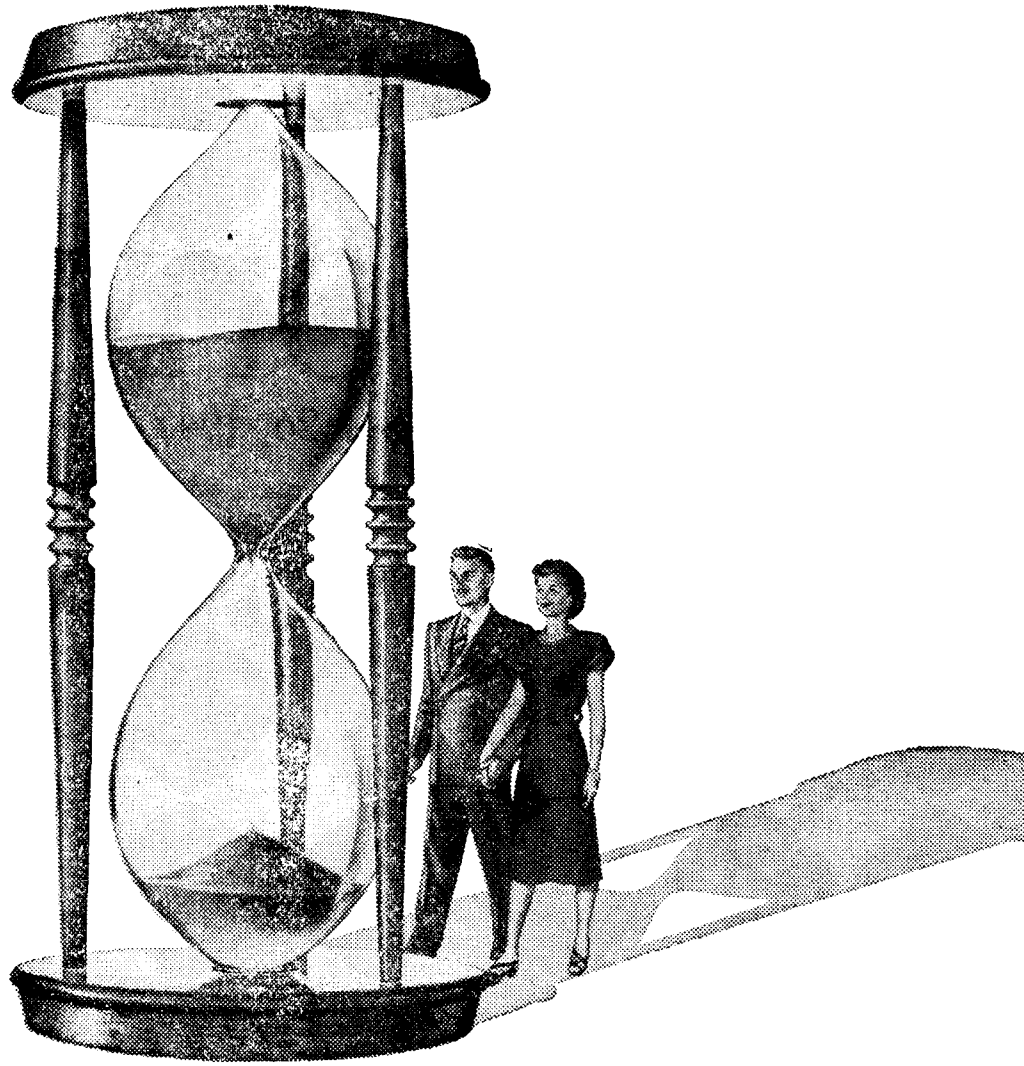

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The
COMMONWEAL

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The Permanent Crisis

PRESIDENT TRUMAN'S reaction to the suggestion that he call Congress into special session for the purpose of dealing with the most recent spasm of economic deterioration in Europe is much like the response of many less consequential citizens of this country. The President is not particularly in favor of an extraordinary session of Congress; things in Europe look about the same to him now as they have for some time —bad, of course, but not any worse than usual. The President may have special reasons for being wary of a crisis (the last time he proclaimed one, on March 12 of this year, he was dealt with rather sharply by some of the newspapers, who claimed that the crisis which brought on the Truman Doctrine had been thought up by the English), but in general his inability to view the European condition as desperate is probably merely a high-level instance of our general emotional fatigue.

By inference, the President is saying that he has been told about quite a few European economic crises during the past few months, so many, in fact, that he has very little excitement left in him to meet this latest one. Anyone who has been at all moved by the newspaper reports coming out of Europe these past few months is bound to agree with Mr. Truman. Nevertheless, this is hardly the time to become blasé about the world's troubles. It is a time, rather, to accept the fact that we live in a time of permanent crisis and to give up the notion that the state of the world can be dealt with according to the regular legislative cycle of the American government, or that it can be all put right by a few weeks of discussion in one special session of Congress.

An extra session of Congress is certainly needed now, but it does not represent an adequate answer to the rise and fall of our attack on the difficulties of the post-war world. What is needed, actually, is a recasting of many elements in our legislative system. There is no very good reason, for example, why Congress could not sit for eleven months of the year. That might be a first step toward centralizing our national energies on problems that can no longer be treated as seasonal affairs. It is a move that would surely react to our favor abroad. The lack of continuity and the jumpiness that characterize our foreign policy would be at least partially eliminated.

By the time the President is settled back in Washington and has had a few conferences with Secretary Marshall, he will probably change his mind about the necessity for a special session. There are some members of the government who believe that a special session of Congress will come too late. Perhaps. Even if it does, however, it will have the effect of safeguarding our psychological position in Europe. The Europeans may be further convinced that we are not organized well enough to handle our job, but they will know, at least, that we are still interested.

At this moment, we have the word of our own Secretary of Agriculture for the fact that the drought of this past summer has reduced American grain production by at least 563,000,000 bushels. We also have the word of the directors of the Bank of England for the fact that the British Treasury recently sold more than 20,000,000 pounds of gold to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York in an effort to do something about the dollar shortage in England. There is also news from the Italian Government announcing that Italy can be expected to run out of dollars by January. All of these choice items indicate that the world problem surrounding America is not a matter that can be disposed of in a special session of Congress. It is, rather, a problem that requires a serious revision of our legislative attitudes and process.

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Six Hundred and Ninety-Seven

RECENTLY seven hundred Catholics in the city of St. Louis came to a meeting in the Electrical Workers Hall. St. Louis is a large city with a large Catholic population so that seven hundred Catholics are not very many Catholics out of the total number that might have come to the meeting. However, the seven hundred might have gone to the movies instead of to the meeting, and when you can get seven hundred people together, for the purpose of considering something that has to do with their city and their Faith, you have a real meeting and you get space in the papers. It's a fact; there's no use arguing about it; seven hundred Catholics can go to a meeting, and what they do there is just important enough to slightly honor, or slightly shame, seven thousand Catholics who weren't there, or seven hundred thousand, or seven million, or all the Catholics there are on the earth, or all the Catholics who have lived and died through nineteen centuries in all the countries all over the earth.

It's not exactly fair, because each one of us honors or shames himself by what he does, and no one else can shame him, but it's not exactly unfair either, because not Catholics only, but all mankind form an indivisible brotherhood—and not just at the moment, but throughout all time, past and future—so that whatever anyone does affects everyone else, shames or honors everyone else. That is how it is. When we are dishonored, then the extraordinary honor and gallantry of so many good men in the past, and all the coming bravery and truth in so many men who are not yet born surrounds us and saves us; when we manage to do something that is not too disgusting, then all who have failed, and all who are to fail and betray, cut us down to our human size.

The seven hundred Catholics from forty-three St. Louis parishes went to their meeting; they produced four hundred dollars which they gave to an executive committee; they instructed the committee to hire a lawyer; they instructed the lawyer to seek an injunction—to prevent Negro children from attending Catholic schools.

"There are about a hundred Negro children in the schools," said their Chairman, John T. Barrett.

Against those Negro children the seven hundred St. Louis Catholics mobilized the American form of the town meeting (with their chairman, their committee, their parliamentary procedure) and they betrayed the spirit which that form is intended to guarantee; they are mobilizing the law to betray a basic equity. Some of them threatened to withdraw their children unless the Negro children were thrown out; most of them thought it best to leave their children in the schools and wait patiently for the lawyer to persuade the courts and the police to forbid a Catholic school from teaching the Negro children either arithmetic or that they are the children of God. Three of the seven hundred voted to leave the Negro children in peace—and were asked to leave the meeting.

So that, accurately speaking, it is six hundred and ninety-seven St. Louis Catholics who have shamed us all.

There is of course one Catholic whom they have shamed and hurt more than any other. He is in their city. He is their pastor. It is against his conception, and the Church's, of the brotherhood of man under God that the six hundred and ninety-seven are revolting. They tried to see him in order no doubt to explain to him their ideas of segregation. They tried to see him in order to force him also to betray. But Archbishop Joseph E. Ritter has remained unvisited, alone and silent—alone, with the unchanging spirit of the Church which has taught all nations and all races; silent, because his silence speaks his sorrow as no words could.

Salute to Mr. Longo

IT IS SELDOM in the war-weary atmosphere in which we live that we hear of a person tirelessly devoting twenty-four hours a day to a struggle for his political convictions. There are all too few Americans like John R. Longo. Here is a man who for the past several years has taken on almost singlehanded one of the nation's most powerful political machines: the Hague machine of Hudson County, N. J., an entity so powerful that even the courts and representatives of the Church are amenable to its bidding. In face of all this, an unjust jail sentence and generally overpowering odds, Mr. Longo has fought the good fight with the legitimate weapons he could in his modest way command. He has never given up. Within the past week two higher court decisions have finally made it almost certain that past injustice to Mr. Longo by subservient New Jersey courts will be rectified. But he is not resting on his oars. He is continually agitating, writing, publishing and personally distributing his biweekly, *Jersey Justice,* in which he fearlessly pillories political corruption throughout his county. The fact that he has just been set upon and beaten up by an ex-convict when distributing his paper in Hoboken will not stop this giant-killer. And time is on his side rather than on Mr. Hague's. Our American political democracy would have a lot more vitality if we could point to several Mr. Longo's.

The Big Spiral

AT LONG LAST, now that individual pocketbooks are hard hit, Americans are alive to the national price situation. Instinctively they are madly looking around for what, or better, whom

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to blame. Scapegoating is all pretty footless; yet in a crisis of this kind, which if unremedied will bring ruinous runaway inflation at home and economic collapse abroad, it does give some clues to a pluralistic solution.

Our present plight goes back directly to the repeal of OPA (effective June 1946) which business interests advocated on the grounds that they would even reduce prices through unfettered increasing production and the ensuing good old competition. Well, within a year prices had increased more than they had during the four and one half war years. And now in the past three months the rate of increase has again doubled. Advocates of premature OPA repeal are the first villains.

Second on the list are the speculators and big operators who have stood to profit most by the steep price rise. Many of them have made, and are still making, a killing. And here we come to our first proposed nostrum. Representative Sabath of Illinois, happily ignoring that Cabinet member's past inactivity, has called upon Attorney General Tom Clark to investigate—as villians of the piece—the big meat packers, the dairy producers combination, the produce exchanges, the Chicago Board of Trade and the fertilizer trust. A most forbidding and formidable array!

Politicians also have much of the guilt to bear —particularly for the lamentable price rises of the past few weeks. In view of what has happened it is difficult to condemn the Truman Administration too harshly. The Department of Agriculture and that of Commerce have vied with each other in issuing warnings which in themselves sent prices kiting; while the Commodity Credit Corporation seems to have timed its purchases of food for export in such a way as to maintain a constant pressure toward higher rates. Why was it not possible for the Government, in expending taxpayers' money for necessary aid abroad, to keep prices at the level at which it had extended its loans to the farmer or agricultural corporation in the first place? To call now for some vague, unorganized voluntary rationing on the part of the American people is but a final touch of ineffectual if not treasonable quarterbacking.

For their part the Republicans, leaders of the offensive to smash OPA, have little to gloat about. They have put a crimp in the family budget by modifying rent controls so as to give landlords a whip-hand. Party leaders from eighteen Midwest and Mountain states (primarily agricultural on a big scale) have just met in Omaha and delivered themselves of this bit of wisdom: "Russia wants us to wreck ourselves economically." (as indeed she does) Therefore, since "our resources are definitely limited," we should make no further shipments abroad until we have looked into our capacity to produce.

The corn crop, to be sure, is somewhat short, and it was the definitive news of the effects of this August's drought that brought on the latest price spurt. But that is somewhat offset by the bumper crop of wheat. The reports from Kansas are to the effect that wheat there is so plentiful that it has to be heaped upon the ground; there is no more storage space. In view of the background sketched here thus far, the growers are holding onto their crop, either for a further rise in price (in hopes of $3 wheat) or until after the first of the year so that their proceeds may be divided between '47 and '48 for income tax purposes. Where the latter reason is predominant, they plan to knock off for a year or two and not grow any wheat at all regardless of domestic and world food needs. Here is one basic commodity where the suggested remedy of greater supplies simply fails to function.

What, if anything, *can* be done? There is the pinch and the resentment of the consuming public to work with. Can it be channeled to result in anything effective? Individual refusal to buy inevitably is sparsely scattered and short-lived. No one has come forward with a plan and the means to put over an organized buyers' strike against exhorbitant prices in any big way. Congress obviously will not restore OPA or any kind of consumer rationing.

Here are several feasible steps garnered from many minds: The Department of Agriculture can come to its senses enough to revive restrictions on the industrial use of agricultural products. Various government agencies will agree to allow prices to decline while surpluses are around. Cattle and hog raisers can be assured of a sufficient feed supply to induce them to expand their next production. The Commodity Credit Corporation can be instructed to time its purchases in such a way that they will not spur prices up. Exchanges and wholesalers, if not retail outlets, can be rationed. Finally, individual municipalities the country over can decree meatless days in restaurants, hotels and possibly even food shops.

This is all very prosaic and seemingly endless in detail, but think of what is at issue! Immediately, the living standards of major groups of our people; ultimately, when wages and prices have chased each other far enough, whole classes of consumers swept out of the market and a major depression—what the Russians are still counting on over here. And then as mounting prices cut down ever more seriously into the flow of goods to Europe, the whole program embodied in the Marshall Plan will collapse of inanition. When the pertinent information is so readily at hand, it does not take unusual insight to appreciate all this. High courage and a new sense of responsibility, however, are essential if Congress and the Administration are to come to grips with this and other vital tasks. EDWARD S. SKILLIN.

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French Catholics and Communism

Robert Barrat

I HAPPENED to be in America some months ago when President Truman made his speech about Greece and Turkey. That speech—it will be recalled—created a great sensation, for it seemed to mark a new direction of American policy in regard to Soviet Russia and communism. The reactions of American public opinion to this speech provided me with an excellent opportunity to test my ideas about how Americans are accustomed to behave politically against what I could directly observe of their conduct on this occasion. I must admit that the contact of my preconceived idea with reality left me somewhat disillusioned. It seemed that I had overestimated the maturity and level-headedness of a people who throughout their history have shown exceptional qualities of calm judgment.

What specially struck me was the extent to which the Catholics I met had oversimplified positions as regards communism. Had I given them even the slightest encouragement some of them would have made it clear to me that in their opinion the best way to deal successfully with communism would be to exterminate all communists. That solution certainly has the merit of extreme simplicity but it must be readily admitted that it has not much in common with an authentically Christian spirit.

It is true that Christianity and communism present themselves to the world today as a religious antithesis. And it is also true that tension, and even open warfare, must exist between those who believe in Heaven and those who do not. However it is evident that a Christian who believes in Christianity and binds himself to its spirit is logically prevented from accepting indiscriminately all forms of warfare. And this, indeed, constitutes precisely the tragedy and glory of his position; he is forced to live in a universe in which everybody cheats and lies, and forced to reject the arms used by his adversaries. We have only the right to the weapons of truth, never the right to kill those who do not agree with us. You will tell me: that goes without saying. But perhaps things will go even better if we say it. For we can accept as a certainty that there still exist, here and there in the world, numerous Catholics whose subconscious mind dreams from time to time of new crusades, furnished with the Inquisition and a night of Saint Bartholomew or two, as a means to put an end to the miscreant creators of disorder and prevent them from having everything their way.

I have no idea whether such ideas are shared by many American Catholics. However that may be, I believe it useful, since the communist problem seems at the moment to be the Number One problem for American Catholic opinion, to attempt to define briefly the position the French Catholics are taking with respect to it. In France, the communist problem is not—is no longer—a purely ideological one since, year in and year out, we have some five million communist voters who elect communist deputies. The problem is a practical one: Christians and communists must live together, side by side, and, very often, they must work together at the same economic, social and even political tasks. Under these circumstances it follows inevitably that no man with common sense can continue to ignore the communist fact, and in our case, the case of French Christians, inevitably we are obliged to attempt to go beyond oversimplified slogans and determine what must be our intellectual and practical behavior in the face of this fact. The manner in which we are acting, the path we more and more tend to follow —this is what I propose to describe.

The great difficulty for a Christian examining communism, and his attitude toward communism, consists in ascertaining what communism really is. Is it simply a method for the analysis of economic phenomena, a technique for political action, a social ideal, or is it a complete philosophy, a total and totalitarian philosophy? Even if the communist leaders find that it helps their propaganda to maintain confusion as to communism's nature, it is a fact that many marxist intellectuals differ considerably among themselves when they have to make this essential definition.

In any case it is this polymorphous aspect of communism which explains—at least to a great extent—the great diversity of attitudes taken by French Catholics toward it. However diverse the attitudes, they may be reduced to three main types.

1. The first consists in seeing in Marxism nothing but an economic and social system, and in dismissing its entire philosophical and metaphysical superstructure. It is thus possible to see Catholics—actually there are but few such Catholics—who proclaim their dissatisfaction with the organization of liberal and capitalist society, and accept the communist revolution as an historical necessity. Some of them go so far as to attempt to collaborate with this revolution. The monthly magazine *Esprit* and the communist weekly *Ac-*

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tion have published declarations of young French Catholics reaching this conclusion.

In such a stand there is, of course, considerable intellectual blindness and confusion. No matter how clever may be the dialectics of the Marxists, it should be entirely impossible for a Christian to ignore how strong is the current of atheistic materialism underlying communism's economic and social theories, and to what a point it is essential to them. It is impossible, also, to have any illusions concerning the historical forms taken by Marxist revolutions wherever they have been carried out. And it is not as a partisan, I believe, that I speak when I state that these forms, no matter how you look at them, have little connection with the ideal of a society still informed with enough Christianity as to ensure the existence of a minimum of freedom, justice and truth —without which there can be no spiritual life possible for the great majority of men.

2. A second category of Catholics takes a stand at the extreme pole from that described. These Catholics argue that since at Marxism's point of departure its philosophical and religious positions are false, then nothing subsequently can be valid in Marxism itself. They say: Marxism is founded on a faulty conception of man and the universe, it rejects every transcendent concept; *therefore* its analysis of detail, or, for example, its description of the economic destiny of given societies, can only be but equally erroneous.

That there is some truth in this reasoning is not to be denied. Misconceiving man's true nature, that of a creature made in the image of God, communism can furnish man with only a distorted image of his destiny, with only a deceptive mirage of his happiness. The error at the point of departure is still there at the point of arrival—when Marxism paints the picture of the ideal society toward which humanity is supposed to be irresistibly advancing.

But does it follow necessarily that one may totally reject the purely critical analysis of contemporary economic society produced by Marx and his disciples? When such Catholics as we describe deliberately entrench themselves against communists and communism in a combative attitude of total ignorance and contempt, they are taking, in our opinion, a singularly negative and sterile position. On the pretext that everything in communism is rotten, they yield most of the time, immediately to a desire to consolidate the existing order—an order which may be as rotten as the communist.

And I am not sure that such an attitude does not conceal a real Pharisaism, a fundamental betrayal of Christian truth. How many bitter adversaries of the well-known "Marxist materialism" are no more than rather poorly camouflaged devotees of Mammon — who would be willing enough to be less severe about Marxist morality and metaphysics if only the communists would promise them that there would still be, in Marx's dream paradise, a nice little reserved pew for profits, interest rates and private property. It is not Christianity as a technique for personal sanctification, and as the path to God, that such Catholics defend against communism, but simply the transitory forms of a secular and middle class civilization with which neither the Church nor Christianity can be identified.

Even if today the number of such Catholics is growing less in France (the war struck hard at inherited wealth) their attitude is one so prevalent throughout the Christian world that it is important to denounce it. It is never enough to be against something; you have to understand what you oppose, and propose something better. So what we have to do today is not just to take an anti-Marxist position; we must offer something better. If we are ever to be rid of Marxism—supposing that this is not an impossible task—it will be because we have transformed society to such an extent that we make that philosophy unneeded and irrevelant.

3. This is the path which is being followed by increasing numbers of Catholics. Rejecting Marxism's philosophical presuppositions, this third Catholic group accepts the validity of the main objections leveled by Marx against liberalism as it functioned in Western society during the nineteenth century. They are working to promote and carry out certain radical reforms in the political, social and economic structure of our country in order to forestall a revolution of the Soviet type which would annihilate man while proposing to free him.

★

The point about the liberalism of the past may be made clearer to the American reader if for a moment we look at history.

For an American must have some difficulty in finding a concrete and familiar interpretation of certain expressions current abroad: "disinheriting the worker, exploitation of the proletariat." As far as I could see, after a short stay, and setting aside completely the question of the American Negro, there is no body of men in America which one may call a proletariat in the European sense of the word. Whether this results from intelligence on the part of the American capitalist, and from a keen sense of national solidarity, the fact is that an American workman, if he so wills, can acquire private property, cultural achievement and reach important managerial positions.

Such has not been the case within the liberal society which Europe has known. It is possible to find all sorts of historical reasons and justifications for the birth and growth of this society. One can say that capitalism, and the doctrine by

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which you let things alone and they manage themselves, were at the origin of a prodigious economic surge and of a generalized advance in material well-being. There remains however the fact that far from freeing the masses by providing abundance for everyone, the system actually benefited only a minority, the "happy few," and brought back into the modern world a slavery as bad as that of antiquity.

Competition, the mad pursuit of profits, the cult of efficiency, reduced the workman, as a human being, to the rank of an instrument, interesting to the employer only as a thing which produced. Within each nation, liberalism was the cause of social disorder; abroad, liberalism was equally incapable of supplying to all nations free access to the great sources of raw materials, and thereby creating an international order founded on justice. The law of the jungle presided over international commerce. The consequent anarchy and disorder were at the origin of the major cyclical crises of over-production whose influence as a cause for recent wars it is hardly necessary to underline.

We cannot avoid recognizing that when this economic and social system arose in the early nineteenth century, showing so clearly that it bore within it the germs of sure disorder and conflict, the reaction of the Christian world was not exactly what one might have expected it to have been. That attempt at a solution called "Social Catholicism" was not broad enough, nor strong enough, to be an answer to the problem. When a house is falling to pieces there comes a time when it is not enough to plaster up the holes and put a shingle or two on the roof; it is the foundations that have to be attended to and the beams.

Only too often the remedies proposed by Social Catholicism—nurseries, homes for the aged, small scattered units of workers' housing—were as if you were holding smelling salts under the nose of a drowned man when he needed artificial respiration. It was the structure itself of society that should have been attacked; the salary system, credit reform, the status of stock companies, the system of private enterprise. But all that of course was dangerous ground. To the voice of their leader calling them to break up the established order (*Rerum Novarum,* which too many Catholics have even now not read, after all, does condemn capitalism and the liberal society) the Catholic world played deaf, for the simple reason that it found it profitable to preserve this order. In those days you could see, as Bernanos reminds us, employers, who never would have thought of missing Sunday Mass, driving ten year old children and women through twelve and fourteen hours of work a day under the watchful eye of jailers whose duty is was to wake them, by beating them, if they fell asleep.

With the Christian world so timid and so impotent, and bringing no needed, no serious reforms, how could anybody possibly expect that Marxism would find no audience among the millions of disinherited workers to whom it said: "You are exploited. Look at the misery you are in. Unite. When you are united and strong you can beak your chains."

★

Two unhappy wars, one after the other, the contacts that you have with men when you are fighting in the army, or when you are at forced labor with your compatriots in a foreign land, or when you are in the resistance movement, in hiding, struggling to free your country—these are experiences which have opened the eyes of the younger generations of French Catholics. We look at our country and we see a working class almost wholly dechristianized and pagan. It is to these workers that we must bring the extraordinary news of the Redemption and the promise of Eternal Life. And it is entirely impossible to bring them this news until we have bettered the material existence of these men, where they work and in their homes. As the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris, Msgr. Suhard, recently reminded us: "You must humanize before you Christianize."

In this light, the very existence of a Communist Party is for us Catholics an instructive lesson. While we fight it, we must take the utmost advantage of the lesson it gives us in the practical field and we must work in that field too.

For we too must be revolutionaries. And we mean by revolutionaries men who cannot accept, or be satisfied with, the present social organization of their country, men who, precisely because of their position as Christians and their thirst for justice in this world, must necessarily be led to fight the established order if that order basically is no more than camouflaged disorder.

The Christians of the Middle Ages were not satisfied with building their cathedrals and sending their wonderful Gregorian Chant up through the skies to Heaven. They did other things too. They fought usury, they defined the concept of the living wage and of lawful profit, they created guilds through which the members felt integrated in the life of the community. Following the example of these distant ancestors, the Christians of today will have to prove that they know how to make their acts, all their acts, as citizens and as individuals, conform to their Faith. There is no such thing as a religious life, and a secular life, each of them separate and entirely impermeable the one to the other. If the Christian is a being who hungers after justice, he must also hunger passionately for that justice which must be made to exist in social and economic relationships. It is for this reason that we say how urgently necessary it is for Christians in general, and for Catholics in particular, to attack immediately the

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problem of reforming the structure, the foundations on which stands—and totters—contemporary society. Technically and practically speaking, the essential is to suppress the régime of the salary by associating the worker not only with the profits but with the management of enterprise. We can be sure that when a young Catholic employer (and this is happening more and more in France) gives up personal ownership of his factory and organizes it as a cooperative, he is doing more toward the reconciliation of the classes and toward the creation of a brotherhood on earth—a true foretaste of the brotherhood which we are promised in Heaven—than can ever be accomplished by a hundred little sermons to the workers preached by the young ladies of Catholic Action.

That a political party inspired by Christian ideals, such as our French MRP (*Mouvement Republicain Populaire*) should not have opposed—although it questioned their imperfect realization—the principle of nationalization and the creation of a broad system of social security, here is a fact which gives Catholics something to stand on when they are telling a meeting of factory workers that Christ came to help the poor and that the Church continues His mission on earth.

It is only by paying the price of action, and by a revolutionary dedication of ourselves, that we will ever have the right, in the light of natural reason and revealed principles, to remind the communists of the fact that their revolution will inevitably be a half revolution, a fraudulent revolution, so long as they persist in misjudging man's true nature, that of a spiritual yet carnal being. Wherever Christians are sincere enough, they find no difficulty in bringing communists to admit that it is hopeless to change man's condition through the sole means of a change in the economic and social structure of society—and that the moral progress of the individual, based on prayer and contemplation, is as necessary as progress in political institutions.

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In concluding this too sketchy analysis, I should like to say to my American friends that I am not sure what manner of problems the existence of a triumphant capitalism may impose on their conscience, but that it might not be unwise for them to realize that the capitalist and liberal régime is neither sacrosanct nor eternal; and, consequently, that instead of going forth to war against communism it might perhaps be better to examine whether the foundations of the society in which they live are as stable as at first sight they appear, and whether that society is based in justice. I am alluding, of course, to the Justice of the Gospel.

Nothing will stop Marxism from winning its fight against an antiquated capitalist society—such is Marxism's vigor, logic and coherence—if in the coming years we are not capable of creating a national and international order which will take far greater account than does individualist liberalism of man's communitarian aspirations and of his thirst for justice.

It seems to me that for Catholics across the Atlantic, as for us, their brothers, in Europe, there is a very wonderful task ahead.

May it only prove possible for us all not to be the workers of the eleventh hour.

Mr. Bevin and Our Gold

R. RICHARD WOHL

MR. BEVIN'S recent proposal that the United States "redistribute" its swollen gold supply as "one of the readiest ways to assist in increasing the purchasing power of the devastated areas of the world" highlights a subterranean discussion, which has been proceeding for some months, on the sovereign power of gold as an economic panacea.

The British Foreign Secretary's proposal was almost completely misunderstood upon its announcement at the Trades Union Congress meeting in Southport. This apparently bizarre proposal has nothing to do with gold as such. It has to do with dollars. There is no shortage of gold in the world. If anything, there is a tremendous oversupply of this soft and pretty metal. Any country in the world that wants to take the trouble and expense of acquiring a supply will find a ready seller in the US Treasury, for almost any amount of it, at thirty-five dollars an ounce. Mr. Bevin would probably be offended if we took his proposal literally. Were we to ship a couple of boatloads of gold ingots to Britain, with the proviso that they could not be sent back to be exchanged for dollars, the British would be horrified. They could no more use it in that form than they could an equivalent cargo of sackcloth and ashes.

American commentators on Mr. Bevin's suggestion have taken him in an exceptionally literal fashion. Pedantically, they pointed out that such a scheme was legally and economically impossible. Our gold supply secured our currency and the deposit liabilities of our banks. Our gold, they noted, would be useless as bullion to whomever we gave it, and would only come back to us to be exchanged for dollars. The sharpest acrimony, however, was reserved for Bevin's comment that we were subjecting ourselves to unnecessarily high levels of taxation by not utilizing our stock of gold. It was pointed out, rather acidly, that if we parceled out our supply of gold bars we would have to replace them with an equally valuable and acceptable asset which could only be raised on the public credit.

Mr. Bevin's proposal was, however, not quite as transparent as was supposed. It concealed a

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brilliant and daring plan to energize the American people into speeding up work on the Marshall Plan, which is lagging in the face of an increasingly critical economic situation developing in Europe. The real roots of the proposal can be found in a mysterious suggestion which reached this country on August 13th of this year. American newspapers for that day gave front-page display to a rumor emanating from London that the US Treasury was about to raise the price of gold to fifty dollars an ounce. In London this anticipated increase was felt to be immediately impending. But the suggestion was quashed the very next day in a curt announcement by Secretary of the Treasury Snyder that no such move was contemplated.

Mr. Bevin's suggestion was rooted in this hoped-for rise in the gold price. If such an increase in the price of gold could be achieved, the inertia of the American people about European aid could be broken. For once this move had been made, an enormous fund could be created, out of thin air, to provide the means for such aid.

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The procedure is clear-cut. Upon the announcement of a higher gold price, the United States Treasury would commence paying fifty dollars for an ounce of fine gold instead of the present price of thirty-five dollars. But, in addition to the higher price paid for new increments of gold brought into the United States, it would also "write up" the value of the gold in its possession, correspondingly. At present the vaults at Fort Knox contain in excess of 598,085,714 ounces of the metal, valued at some 20.9 billion dollars. If the price on each ounce were to rise fifteen dollars, the total increase in the value of our gold stock, *without the addition of a single grain,* would amount to more than 8.9 billion dollars.

This increase would be an accounting fiction. Some Treasury official would dip a pen in an inkwell, and enter the increase in the Treasury's ledgers. There would be no actual increase either in the stock of gold, nor in national wealth.

In 1934, the same procedure was followed when the gold price was raised from twenty dollars and sixty-seven cents an ounce, to the present rate of thirty-five dollars. On the day when the Gold Reserve Act became law, the United States Treasury enterd the following item into its statement of receipts and expenditures: "Miscellaneous receipts: Increment resulting from the reduction in the weight of the gold dollar—$2,806,413,202.52." The bulk of this amount, two billion dollars, was set aside as an exchange stabilization fund.

Mr. Bevin must surely have realized, as well as his critics did, that a physical distribution of our existing gold stock was legally impossible and economically futile. If we take into account the suggestion of a rise in the gold price, his proposal takes on new shades of meaning. What is, in fact, to be distributed, is the surplus created by a rise in the price of gold. At the rumored fifty dollars an ounce gold price, a surplus of 8.9 billion dollars can be set aside as an exchange stabilization fund. This proposal has the psychological advantage of being capable of achievement *without the levying of an additional penny of taxes or the issuance of even a single dollar of new bonds by the government.* That portion of our existing gold stock that is represented by the increased price is merely set aside. All the functions now performed by gold continue unimpaired.

Such a scheme would amount, in effect, to printing 8.9 billion dollars of new money, and may be condemned as inflationary. It may be further attacked as undermining confidence in our currency. However, the nature of "confidence" in money is an esoteric subject for economists who have never accounted for what constitutes social acceptability of money in purely economic terms. The historical record indicates that the real basis of confidence is the ability to buy and sell goods at a fairly constant price level. Money is as good or bad as is its warrant to buy and sell, of which it is a token.

There can be no denying that the expenditure of large sums for foreign relief and reconstruction constitutes an inflationary potential. Even if the sums for this purpose are raised by taxation, or through Federal borrowing, the deposit of the sums required by foreign purchasers in American banks creates a mountain of credit which can be used to create an inflationary spiral.

There is another aspect from which the use of gold as an economic remedy may be viewed. Gold is now the outlaw money of the world. The US has gained possession of about 65 percent of the world's stock of monetary gold. In other countries the inflations which resulted from wartime dislocations have created a severe distrust of paper money. Large amounts of currency are daily being exchanged for gold as a hedge against the effects of still further inflation.

Chinese merchants nightly sneak across the Canton River to Portuguese Macao and change bundles of notes into gold. In Bombay, gold sells for eighty-nine dollars an ounce in the bazaars, and the demand for it is insatiable. Recently, an airplane was intercepted at Karachi with an illegal cargo of 16,000 ounces flown in from abroad. The same is true of pockets of black market activity in North Africa and throughout Europe. In Athens, for instance, there is a thriving black market in English sovereigns. During the war, the British dropped more than a million of these gold coins to Greek resistance forces. Now they are passing through the hands of profiteers and

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speculators at the rate of 165,000 drachmae per sovereign.

Until the International Monetary Fund protested against this traffic certain governments attempted to cash in on this bonanza. There was a steady flow of gold sales from the National Bank of Mexico at forty-five dollars an ounce, as well as considerable export from Switzerland. Up to the present, the US sends out a trickle of gold, at the rate of 500 to 1,000 ounces a month, to feed this traffic. There is a strong move on hand, however, to amend the Gold Reserve Act of 1934 to prevent private exports of gold bars, following the protest of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York against such dealings at higher than the Treasury price.

Because of the limited gold stocks held abroad, these black market dealings in gold have a profoundly unsettling effect on currency stabilization in any country in which they take place. The pronouncements of governments and their central banks have an attenuated effect when they are discounted in the black market gold price. It seems most likely that the presence of a supply of gold in the national banks of the governments concerned, of sufficient quantity to offset black market quotations, would have a very wholesome effect on currency stabilization.

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In essence, Mr. Bevin's proposals are a mark of significant economic statesmanship in that they take into account profound psychological drives which the economic planners, too easily assured by statistics and theoretical formulae, are prone to discount.

The major objection to rapidly implementing a wide program for international reconstruction of devastated areas is bound up, in American opinion, with a view that such action would impoverish the United States by precisely the amount that is advanced for reconstruction purposes. It is too little appreciated in this country that an immense backlog of our national prosperity depends on the continued tension of demand that producing for foreign orders provides our economy. Such export orders have been falling rapidly as the credits and foreign exchange of our foreign customers have been dissipated.

Secondly, the Bevin proposal, if this interpretation of it is correct, seeks to circumvent the insidious effect that informal and black market trading has had on currency stabilization efforts of the governments of the devastated countries.

The principal criticism that can be lodged against the Bevin proposal is that it bypasses the elaborate machinery for international collaboration in problems of this kind that was envisioned at Bretton Woods. That the British, and the British Foreign Secretary in particular, have discounted the possibility of rapid fruition to these schemes of international economic cooperation is understandable.

Economic understanding and assistance at this level is not purely an economic problem. Nor can the solutions required for these problems be given purely in terms of economic categories. These problems of reconstruction and exchange stabilization are *political* problems of the first order. Their ultimate solution is dependent on the pattern of peace which is yet to emerge from the council chambers of the great powers.

There is no peculiar virtue to recommend the Bevin proposals other than that they attack our own lethargy and political unrealism in a particularly forceful way. He has discovered that the way to attack the American pocketbook is to storm the imagination of the nation. In this he is correct. It seems a pity that his unfortunate presentation of his proposal produced precisely the opposite effect to that intended.

The Work of the People

H. A. REINHOLD

WHEN THE local chamber of commerce finds a label for a town and gets it into folders, on billboards and into the jargon of newsmen, it always carries a flavor of artificiality. Why Portland should be called the city of roses when there are more roses in other towns and when its pine-clad hills, its busy Willamette waterfront and the three snow-covered giants, Mount Hood, St. Helens and Mount Rainier are something other cities do not have, I frankly do not know. I think I saw more roses in Seattle than in Portland. Most Easterners, which means out here anybody who lives east of the Rockies with a few exceptions like Denver or Cheyenne, come to Portland expecting a great deluge of rain, wet streets and clammy bed sheets.

Our guests at the liturgical week found a different Portland, agreeably cool, green, fresh and sunny, and above all no humidity in the air. They found a city busy for its size and vividly interested in things of the intellect, the arts and broad-visioned city planning. The twenty or thirty years of greater age give Portland a sort of mature and staid note as compared with gay and reckless Seattle. As Catholics they found a city exceptionally well prepared for the event. For twenty years Archbishop Howard has labored hard to enforce the reforms of Pius X in as many parishes and schools as possible. He crowned his efforts this spring in a pastoral letter which made the clerics of the nation sit up and listen: parish High Mass in all churches not sung by choirs, but by the congregation and led by a well-trained *schola*. With the exception of perhaps

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Pittsburgh or Cleveland I do not know of any of the other American archbishoprics or dioceses, most of them far more populous, rich and thoroughly organized than Portland, where such a program has left the decree and paper stage to the extent this has happened in Portland. Naturally all of us regard Portland as the greatest success of the seven liturgical weeks since 1940.

There were a few new features which, even were they never to be repeated again to the same degree, made Portland a milestone. For the first time the liturgical week shook off the pattern of making the "talking" the main thing and the "doing" something that looked secondary. The participants this time did what they regarded as the ideal. Well over a thousand priests, religious and layfolk celebrated the mysteries of Christ under ideal conditions and with an ideal amount of solemnity. That an auditorium had to be used; that the replica of the physical arrangements of a Roman basilica were rather makeshift, did not detract an iota from the grandeur and the warm, sacramental intimacy of this experience. Above all the perfect execution of the whole of the sacred music in Gregorian Chant under the masterful direction of Father Austin Johnson, and the enthusiastic participation of over a thousand participants in the chant of the Ordinary, made a tremendous impression. The endless lines of the communicants showed that this was no mere show or demonstration.

The things that made the Portland week exceptional were the arrangement of the sanctuary and the fulness of the musical part of the liturgy.

Let us first see what Father Thomas J. Tobin, a student of Roman basilicas, did to create the right frame. In his mind were such basilicas as Santa Maria in Cosmedin, San Clemente and, above all, the queen of basilicas, Santa Sabina on the Aventine Hill. In them we found preserved the furnishings which were created when the liturgy itself was made and at a time when every Mass was a solemn, sung Mass with full popular participation. The very size of these churches invites full sharing of the people in the mysteries and prevents the liturgy from becoming a sacred drama on a stage before a silent audience. The altar is at the entrance of the sanctuary. The priest faces the people and therefore there is an immediate, live contact. The *schola* is in front of the altar, where it belongs as an intermediary between clergy and layfolk. The bishop's throne, too, faces the people in the center of the back of the apse, while the assistants form an open half-circle around the altar facing the people.

Some critics see in this arrangement a romantic return of a few intellectuals to ancient forms, as grotesque as Pugin's neo-Gothic extravagances. I for one feel that historic and romantic considerations have nothing to do with a revival of this arrangement. The real reason is entirely different: what has become a fossilized ritual and a function of show and legal performance is being redeemed and brought back to the Christian people. There is no better, no more perfect condition under which our liturgy, as it is, could be celebrated by the Church, hierarchically and in an orderly manner gathered around the center of our Faith, the altar and its great mystery, the Mass.

Nor is the singing of the full introit, the complete offertory and the Communion processional something dragged in by antiquarians. The singing of psalms brings back to us all the riches of Old Testament faith. With their antiphons they become transfigured into sacramental, Christian anthems. When you saw the Archbishop of Portland make his solemn introit while the *schola* sang the full and meaningful unmutilated processional you knew this was more than a mere routine rendering of a prescribed text!

In most churches the offertory is perfunctorily recited or chanted to save time for a motet. We should be against this for many reasons: we the people have a right to be led into the spirit of today's sacrifice by the music and text made for this very occasion. Then, why should we have to listen to a motet which almost always is alien to the subtle and beautiful word composition of the day and, so to speak, a patent seasoning fitting all occasions? The subtle beauty of the ancients' offertories, recently re-edited by Solesmes, their profundity and piety is the sole true leader of heart and mind into the sanctuary of the sacrifice.

The same is true about the processional at Communion time. There may be a day when the whole congregation approaches the sacred banquet singing the Church's appropriate psalm, seasoned and adorned with new overtones and meanings by the alternating antiphonal chant of the *schola*. However, that is a bold hope which will probably only become a reality, if we receive permission to sing such chants in the vernacular as the first eight centuries did.

My readers will by now feel that so far very little has been said about the papers that were read and the lively discussions in which the laity and the Sisters took such an active part. This is by no means an oversight of the reporter! There were splendid papers. The climax of the whole week was on the second evening, when Monsignor Martin Hellriegel of Holy Cross Church in St. Louis, Mo., acted as narrator in a step by step demonstration of the Mass. Up to two thousand priests, nuns and old and young people sat there in breathless attention for three full hours to hear, many for the first time, a simple, vivid, deeply believing explanation of what they themselves had seen and heard from their childhood

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days. There is no doubt that this pastors' pastor was the man of the week. Wherever his large, genial and warm personality appears children as well as mature men open their hearts. Already his two creations, the liturgical center of O'Fallon and the model parish of Holy Cross are pilgrimages for countless young priests, pastors, missioners and eager seminarians. Where tots can sing whole Latin Masses and altar boys fight on vacation mornings to serve and sing High Mass, where the priest gets tired giving Communion on any ordinary week-day. I know of no man except perhaps the world-famous Canon Pius Parsch, who has the good and affectionate pastor's genius of improvisation, his power of visualizing and articulating. If I had the power I would send him all the parish priests to see that the people love, want, understand the liturgy and get holier and happier through it.

As this is no complete report but a pointing to what seem to be the most significant things, I am not giving such details as the splendid hospitality, the fatherly presence of the Archbishop, the faultless organization nor even the most interesting group discussions of 600 teaching Sisters, again taking notes from the inexhaustible store of Monsignor Hellriegel's, of 50 seminarians, of 800 laypeople and 40 seminary professors deliberating about the liturgical spirit in their schools. There was one interesting indication at the parish priest's meeting. We took a poll just to see how the average priest in pastoral work feels. This was doubly interesting because the same mood prevails in the last issue of the French liturgical quarterly, *Maison-Dieu* (Ed. du Cerf, 29 Bvld. Latour-Maubourg, Paris VII). To judge from this poll the majority of the pastors would welcome the permission to use the vernacular. More than half of the pastors would like to have English at the public parish Mass for the parts that are "Kerygma" (gospel and epistle) and those parts which are sung aloud. Ninety percent would be happy if they were allowed to baptize and bury in English and to use English for Extreme Unction. There was almost unanimity (I remember 52 versus 3) when the question was raised: would you welcome the permission to use English facultatively in the private recitation of your breviary. This is certainly a surprise in view of the fact that neither "The English Liturgist" (Editor Father S. J. Gosling, Alton, Stoke-on-Trent, England) nor the French publication is read very widely and when you remember the trouncing one gets for advocating a thorough discussion of this most important issue!

If a small metropolitan diocese on the West Coast could offer such a vital and challenging program, we may have even greater hopes for 1948, when the liturgical week will be guest of the forward-looking Archbishop of Boston.

Communications

THE CENSORSHIP IN EIRE

Dublin, Eire.

TO the Editors: In your issue of August 15, 1947, you published an article, "The Censorship in Eire," by Margaret Barrington, who describes herself variously as Irish (e.g. "our Censorship," "as soon as we had a Government of our own") and as "an interested stranger." She says, also, she lives by "the profession of letters." I must confess, perhaps to my shame, that I have never heard of her, nor have any of my acquaintances.

The lady, I suggest, has either not studied her subject or has allowed herself to be carried away by her self-confessed anti-censorship bias, for her article is teeming with misrepresentation and error.

For example, she refers to Professor Magennis, to take only one member of the Censor Board, as "addle-pated," as "capable of seeing indecency where there is none" and as "emotionally adolescent." In the USA, where Professor Magennis (a worthy professor of our National University and a gentleman on whom the Pope conferred a Knight Commandership of Saint Sylvester) was not known, this may pass as a sober judgment. Here, where he is remembered affectionately as a scholar of high repute, it cannot pass as anything but slander—and at that, slander of the dead, for Professor Magennis has long since passed away, though Margaret Barrington tells your readers that he is Chairman of the Censor Board.

Also, despite the fact that she is obviously aware that it has been amended, she describes as current the procedure under the original Act, which, in fact, has been entirely abrogated. Again, she thinks that Mr. de Valera's party came to power in 1929—in fact, not until over two years later did it come to power. The Censorship of Publications Act came into full force previously.

According to Margaret Barrington there is not a single Irish writer of repute whose work has not been banned. Are not T. C. Murray, Lynn Doyle, J. D. Sheridan, Seamus O'Sullivan, Robert Farren, Irish writers of repute? These are only a few of our writers none of whose books has been banned. Margaret Barrington also conveys the impression that there has been wholesale prohibition of such books as those of G. B. Shaw, Kate O'Brien, the Powys Brothers. In fact, only one of Shaw's many books has been banned, and the same is true of other authors she names.

I am not committing myself to one hundred percent approval of the decisions of the Censor Board when I characterize Margaret Barrington's article as wholly mischievous. We, knowing all the circumstances, and believing that you would not publish such an article as hers if you did not know that she could be depended upon to uphold truthful standards as far as she is conscious of them, can only conclude that she wrote without knowledge.

F. O'REILLY, *LL.D., K.C.S.G.,*
Executive Secretary,
Catholic Truth Society of Ireland.

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The Screen

Grim Is the Word

I DON'T suppose the heads of the various studios got together and decided to give the public a strong dose of realism in stark dramas; Hollywood just doesn't work in such a manner. But that could seem the intention when one considers such current films as "Crossfire," "Possessed," "Brute Force," "The Kiss of Death" (all made by different studios) and the four new entries reviewed this week. Furthermore there are several others coming up in the next few months. So take a deep breath before you plunge into life in the raw.

Producer-Director Anatole Litvak sets the scene well, at the beginning of *"The Long Night,"* with some effective shots of the picture's locale, a steel town on the Ohio-Pennsylvania border. After this documentary-like opening, the film gets into action, and we find Joe, who has just murdered a man, barricaded in his cheap boarding-house room against the police. During the long night, while Joe and the police fight it out, flashbacks reveal how this steel worker got himself into this losing position. Several months ago Joe met and fell in love with Jo Ann who seemed just the girl for him since both had come from the Good Shepherd Orphanage; both were lonely and they became such good friends. But Jo Ann was also interested in another man, a second-rate magician who represented worldly glamor to the inexperienced girl. When Joe learned that the magician had seduced the girl, Joe killed him in a fit of rage. It is not so much the plot that makes "The Long Night" an exceptional movie; it is its good use of camera to establish mood, its attention to detail and characterization and Litvak's direction of the leads as well as the minor players in this grim drama. As the perplexed and unhappy steel worker, Henry Fonda gives a moving performance. Equally effective is Barbara Bel Geddes, in her first screen appearance; her nice, but not too pretty, face and her unpretentious acting make naïve Jo Ann a very believable person. Although Vincent Price is a touch hammy at times, he is properly oily and vicious as the libertine. And as his co-worker, the woman who loves him even as she sees through his shoddiness, Ann Dvorak is excellent. Obviouly "The Long Night" is nothing for the kiddies—but it does provide thoughtful entertainment for adults. And furthermore, this Hollywood product compares favorably with the French version made several years ago.

"The Dark Passage" is another film that shows one man's fight against the forces of law. Since he had already lost a major battle and had been sent to prison for a murder he did not commit, he has quite a difficult time, after escaping from San Quentin, in evading the police, tracking down the real murderer and disposing of a blackmailer. Producer Jerry Wald and Director Delmer Daves, evidently realizing that this story is overly melodramatic and not too probable, resorted to good cinema technique to develop suspense and realism; and the resulting film is better than its original material. The expertly photographed San Francisco locale gives a real flavor of the city. In the first half of the movie, done in a style similar to "The Lady in the Lake," everything is witnessed through the eyes of the escaped convict; we do not see his face, but we see what he sees. We do hear his voice, so it is no surprise after the harrowing plastic surgery sequence to discover that he then looks like Humphrey Bogart. Before this man proves his innocence (to us, but not to the law) he has many exciting adventures and is implicated in three more deaths. Lauren Bacall, Agnes Moorhead, Clifton Young and others assist Bogart in making you jump out of your seat occasionally. I don't think this current trend, in which so many so-called heroes have to take the law in their own hands, is a particularly healthy symptom of our times, but it must be admitted that films of this kind make a point every now and then that bear closer scrutiny. "The Dark Passage" puts over a few sharp cracks about the lessons in crime one can learn at San Quentin.

This effort on the part of producers to give us rough, raw and brutal fare can, of course, be carried too far, especially when the themes have no meaning beyond their own violence. *"Desert Fury"* is an example. Expensively made in technicolor that is used to no particular advantage other than beautifying the scenery, and studded with stars whose talents could have been used better elsewhere, this picture does little more than let its characters talk tough before the camera. Its plot, which is not too sure of what it's trying to say about these hard-boiled people, wanders on and on about a girl (Lizabeth Scott) who defies her strong-willed mother (Mary Astor) who runs a gambling joint and knows the ropes. No doubt ma's method for saving the daughter is not as wise as her intentions. The girl turns down the sheriff (Burt Lancaster) whom ma has lined up for her and hurries into the arms of a gangster (John Hodiak) who is relaxing in the desert in between jobs. Nothing good comes of this, but it takes the film a long time to say so. One even suspects that "Desert Fury" is satirizing other movies in the hard-boiled school; everything is carried to a point at which you wonder who's kidding whom. If you see this picture, the joke's on you.

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"Deep Valley" is another movie that is likely to make audiences scream for some good old escapist froth. In this drab item, the neurotic heroine (Ida Lupino) stutters; and you can hardly blame her, for her mother (Fay Bainter) is a faded Southern belle who stays in bed all day, and her father (Henry Hull) has let his farm go to the dogs. The girl takes up with an escaped convict (Dane Clark) who was maltreated by a guard—and in no time she stops stuttering, ma comes downstairs and pa goes to work. No doubt "Deep Valley" is trying to make a point, but even its good cast, who also try, can't sell us this story. There's a limit to how many psychopaths you can crowd into one movie, especially when you're being serious about something that should be called "Arsenic and Old Joads."

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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Is Mr. Wallace the Momentous Man?

JONATHAN TITELESCU FOGARTY

I WAS MIGHTY gratified to learn that Mr. Truman, the President, wrote the words, "a momentous period of history." For a long time now, I have been saying that we have been living in "a momentous period of history", and it is flattering to an ordinary man like myself to know that the President of the United States agrees with me.

I have always tried to imbibe the wisdom of the ages and the sages, and to keep abreast of the news of the day, and I have been giving some thought and some study to the parlous problems of the period. Like I have been saying, and like the President wrote, this is "a momentous period of history." I am a practical man. So as a practical man, I have asked myself—What are we going to do about it? Aye, there's the question. But what is the answer?

So I have thought it out this way. What do we have to do if we live in a momentous period of history?

We have to live momentously.

But how can we live momentously?

We can live momentously by finding the momentous man.

When I saw that this is the practical answer, I then applied myself to a study of the question—Who is the momentous man?

Now I am not a scholar, and I am no long hair, but I always believe a man should be mighty thorough about anything that he thinks and writes, and so I have made a study, just as if I were a scholar. I began my study by asking the question—Who might be the momentous man?

Some people think Mr. Henry A. Wallace is the momentous man. Of course, I have nothing against Mr. Wallace. He never met me, but I know that if he did, I would like him. He is a mighty serious man, and he does a lot of good in the world, and I always take my hat off to the man who has a good heart and does good. So I approached the question—Is Mr. Wallace the momentous man?—with an open mind. Like I always say, I always listen to the other fellow and subscribe to the principle that one man's opinion is as good as another, and I never like to argue and be hostile about a man's opinion. I respect the other fellow. Well, a lot of the other fellows think that Mr. Wallace is the momentous man. So I studied the question with an open mind.

Studying this question, I had to ask—What is Mr. Wallace?

Well, here is the answer.

Mr. Wallace is a dreamer from the cornfields. Now I have nothing against the dreamer. Because I like poetry myself and my favorite poet is the well-known Bard of Avon. And what is poetry but dreams? And what are dreams? Dreams are the spiritual nutrition that makes life worth living. So here is what I say about dreams. They are the corn that feeds the soul. When I saw that Mr. Wallace was a dreamer, I became mighty sorry that he did not choose to become a poet when he was a young man. Because we need poets and dreamers. But even if he is not a poet but is a public man and our former Vice-President, he dreams some mighty fine dreams for all of us, and he is doing us a lot of good, because he is giving us the corn we need for our national soul. So you can see that I have nothing against Mr. Wallace. I am mighty glad that we have him. Along with the dreams he gives us, he is a worrier, and we need a worrier. Now I believe that the best philosophy of life is the philosophy of the silver lining. But how are we going to find the silver lining if we don't have some dark clouds? And so a national worrier brings out the dark clouds and after we look at the clouds, then we find the silver lining.

But is a dreamer and a worrier the momentous man? Some say yes, and some say no. Here is what I say.

There is a mighty brainy man who writes some mighty fine editorials for a mighty fine newspaper called PM. I forget this man's name but he is really brainy and sometimes he writes things I have been saying now for a long time. This man says that we have to understand the Russians. That's what I think. I have some ideas about understanding the Russians but I can't write about them here because I am writing about something else. But I will give you my ideas about understanding the Russians some other time. When I read this mighty fine editorial about understanding the Russians, here is the way I reasoned. One and one makes two, doesn't it? Now suppose we say that we are one, and the Russians are one. How are we going to get two? By arithmetic. We have to apply the arithmetic of understanding. We are going to understand the Russians. And then, the Russians are going to understand us. So I say this. The Russians have got to understand us.

Now the momentous man must know the arithmetic of understanding. Does Mr. Wallace know this?

To answer this question we have to consider Mr. Stalin. I think it is a mighty smart idea to consider him anyway. Because he likes to be considered, and if we show him this little mark of our politeness, he might think better of us. I have some ideas about understanding Mr. Stalin too, but I will project them for you another time.

Now if we want the Russians to understand us, Mr. Stalin will have to understand us. Mr. Stalin is the most

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understanding man in Russia, and whenever he understands anything, all of the Russians understand the same thing mighty quick. But what will Mr. Stalin think, and how will he understand us if Mr. Wallace is our momentous man?

But that means another question—What is Mr. Stalin?

That brainy editorial writer I spoke of above from the newspaper has answered this question.

Mr. Stalin is a realist.

Now a realist is the way they speak of a practical man in the history books. And can a realist understand a dreamer? I am a practical man and a realist myself, and so here is what I did. I imagined I was Mr. Stalin,

So, I am Mr. Stalin, living in Moscow, and I am being very realistic. So, I have my breakfast and one of my men, who belongs to my police force with an alphabetical name, brings me in the New York papers. So I read the papers. The papers say that Mr. Wallace is traveling in Europe and making some speeches. I am a realist and a practical man and so I do not pay too much attention to speeches. Whenever a Russian makes a speech, he only says what I know, and I never learn anything from Russian speeches. So, another speech? But then, this Mr. Wallace is an important American. He was vice-president, something like what my Mr. Molotov is. I read the speeches of Mr. Molotov now and then because I like to make him feel good. So I read Mr. Wallace's speech. And it is interesting. And the papers say that Mr. Wallace thinks that somebody else ought to own the Panama Canal. Now I have been thinking, I wouldn't mind owning the Suez Canal. I kind of like canals anyway. The Panama Canal! Maybe the Americans don't want it anymore. And then, the paper says that Mr. Wallace wants to loan my Russians fifteen billion dollars. So I call for Mr. Litvinov. Mr. Litvinov is in bad health, but I have to see him. So I tell one of my alphabetical policemen to bring him to see me. I ask him a question:

"Mr. Litvinov, what would the Americans say if somebody wanted to loan them fifteen billion dollars?"

So, Mr. Litvinov says, "Great Leader," (the Russians talk that way because they have a great deal of respect for Mr. Stalin) "That's nothing to sneeze at."

You see, Mr. Litvinov knows the Americans because he was here and can talk our language.

So I am Mr. Stalin, and I think. The Panama Canal? Fifteen billion dollars? I put my elbow on my desk, and I put my chin in my hand, and I think.

The Panama Canal?

Fifteen Billion Dollars?

I light my pipe, and I become a little dreamy. But then, I remember that I am a realist. So I shake my head.

No!

And then I remember that they used to have Indians in America just like I have Ukrainians. The Ukrainians are funny people. They once didn't want to be Russians. Fancy that! They must have a lot of Indians still in America. And the Indians must have plotted against the Americans. Because I remember that one of my ambassadors, I can't remember his name, and he is now in Siberia and I can't get in touch with him quickly enough to remember his name, told me that the Americans have a phrase, "Indian giving."

So I am still Mr. Stalin in Moscow. I shake my head, and I say to myself:

No! No! This can't be. I am a realist!

But fifteen billion dollars!

I shake my head. I tell myself:

They never gave the Panama Canal away before. Nothing to sneeze at? Something is wrong. This is a plot. The Americans are plotting against me.

So, what do I do? I bring in the editor of the newspaper, *Pravda*. That means the Truth in Russian just like the Truth in American means the Truth. And I tell the editor that there is a new American plot. And he writes an article about the plot of the American Indian givers, and he describes the Indians as if they were Ukrainians.

Now the men who write for this Russian Truth are mighty sharp and they use some very strong language. And they have a lot of experience in writing about plots. So they write in their paper about the new plot. Well, if that happens, we could have another international crisis. And that might make these times a little too momentous. I do not think that we had better take a risk like this. And that is why I do not think that Mr. Wallace is the momentous man we are looking for.

★

This reminds me about my grandfather, Michael Ivanovitch Fogarty. He was a fine stalwart old oak, but after he became ninety he was a little dreamy. One day when he was ninety-four, he went out by himself and started giving out one dollar bills to anybody he saw. Well, he got into a little trouble. People didn't understand that he was just dreamy, and the family had a hard time keeping him out of a place nobody wants to be. Now if the Russians are anything like the people back home were in my grandfather's day, well they might think we are all dreamy if we start giving out checks for fifteen billion dollars.

So now we have to ask the question—If Mr. Wallace is not the momentous man, who is? I will have more to say about this in the future. And I am confident that in the fulness of time I will be able to end my studies by finding the momentous man.

Books of the Week

The Brazilians: People of Tomorrow. Hernane Tavares de Sà. John Day. $3.00.

DR. TAVARES has written an excellent, easily grasped dissertation on his nation, Brazil, something that ought to make its impression, for good and bad, on our good neighbor policies of the future. For the area that the League of Nations envisioned as capable of supporting 300 million people, today has only 45 million, and at least 30 million of these, he tells us, are suffering from a "qualitative rather than a quantitative form of hunger."

As a result, 42.5 percent of the population is below the age of fourteen, and one child in five (one out of six in Rio de Janeiro) dies before its first birthday. The reason lies in the fact that "only in the propertied classes does one find consistently high standards of health." The

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greatest toll is taken in the cities by tuberculosis and syphilis. Even middle-class bank employees in São Paulo "showed a positive reaction to the Wasserman test in one out of every four," and authorities consider that it has reached the stage of an epidemic.

To make matters worse, Dr. Tavares reports 12 million illiterate adults, and 7 million children between 12 and 18 without schools.

The late Senator Bilbo would have solved the social problems of Brazil by sending their black people back to Africa. What he would have done with the equally ill and backward Indians, of course, cannot now be answered, and there is no record that he ever expressed himself on this question. But even Dr. Tavares reports, along with some recent American Negroes who have traveled through Brazil, that the ruling class is working hard to acquire a larger measure of whiteness of skin.

For, each year the children of Brazil celebrate the *Dia de Raca* following some weeks of being taught that it is "important for Brazil that many races and colors participate in the formation of the national type, but always with a predominance of white so as to establish the branqueamento," and the word *branqueamento* means "the whitening process," Dr. Tavares tells us with a straight face.

How much Brazilian race prejudice is racism, and how much is due to class, is always a disputed question. But undoubtedly, with enough North American instruction, the "blood" will run far ahead of the achievements in the pay-off. Meanwhile, Dr. Tavares notes that the Brazilian Navy, from a study by Gilberto Freyre, the sociologist, is lily-white, albeit mediocre, while a more democratic Army has produced more outstanding men. But the ruling class is, on the whole, white, and it strives to remain that way.

American Negroes would read with interest Dr. Tavares's comment that the upper-class Brazilian people tend to boast of their Indian blood, but a "touch of Negro ancestry is carefully hidden unless there is a throwback member of the family with undisguisable Negroid features, who is known as the *tira-teima,* meaning 'no use arguing.' "

In America, of course, the too obvious Negro in the family closet would be made president of a Negro college, or assigned to a worse place in Sinclair Lewis's novel about the passing-for-white problem.

It is significant also, that Dr. Tavares argues that he is opposed to spelling Negro with a capital "N," which is not inconsistent with liberalism on the race question, if the Brazilians actually plan to wipe out the hair too kinky, and the skin too dark for North American acceptance.

In the same vein, Dr. Tavares writes of the recent Jewish immigrants who apparently insist on being Jews. "Since 1940," he writes, "the Jews who came to Brazil presented something of a problem, and they have awakened rumblings of anti-Semitism in those who come in contact with them. However, Brazilians instinctively feel that time will work for them and that the Jews no more than any other group will be able to resist the country's attitude towards their race."

The Japanese in Brazil are discouraged from marrying into their own group, as are all Europeans who might marry their own nationals. This, we are told, reflects the national attitude against a "racial cyst."

The history of the states of northeastern Brazil will be observed as part of a social and economic history closely resembling the southern states of our country. Here were the slave-holding, sugar plantation people, now driven out of the economic picture. And here is the area, where, as in our own South, most of the Brazilian racial mixing went on. Dr. Tavares declares that except for the leading families, Indians, Negroes and whites have mixed in the northeast to the extent that there is now a homogeneous Brazilian type. It is equally interesting that he writes how much the northeastern Brazil people "dismisses its economic poverty with the aristocrat's disdain for trade, and considers itself the guardian of the soul of the nation it did so much to create and defend."

North American writers and social investigators once more have the opportunity to reflect upon the fact that the smart young *nordestinos* have first call with the newspapers of Rio and São Paulo, while politically, "the six northeastern states, with only one-fifth of the population of the country, account for more than 50 percent of the public officials on the federal payroll." They no longer claim the Presidency of Brazil, but "the key positions in the cabinet and in the federal departments are heavily staffed by nordestinos."

Dr. Tavares puts it this way: "The two great slave-holding areas in the western hemisphere, the south of the United States and the northeast of Brazil, each built economic prosperity on a single crop, cotton in the North America, sugar in South America. This special type of economy developed a certain kind of society and above all created an aristocracy with remarkable points of resemblance in the two countries. It was in both cases a slave-holding, rural patriarchal aristocracy. In both countries this aristocracy lies today shattered, decadent, and impoverished."

The rest of the story of Brazil concerns itself with how to save the country economically without turning it over to North American exploiters. The railroads of Brazil are pictured as obsolete, without a standard gage. Building good roads is still something that one can hardly discuss with his mind on realism in the semi-tropical regions. In March 1944, a tunnel caved in between São Paulo and Minas, the author relates, "breaking off communications between the capital and the two most populous states" for several weeks, with the result that it was impossible to get eggs, milk or vegetables, all of which came from these two states.

If the country has "skipped the railroad era," the question comes about highways. And yet, gasoline must be imported while the existing railroads are being electrified, counting on huge hydroelectrical developments. The possible oil deposits are still far out in the inaccessible area of the country; the petroleum of the Acre territory being two months from Rio.

Dr. Tavares reminds us also, that Brazil needs a more efficient and honorable method of raising taxes. As matters stand, his nation is witnessing between the states, illegal, export-import taxes in a disguised form, "the most devilish deterrents to the flow of free trade within the country." In addition, the national and state governments are confusing the construction of scenic drives and gaudy public buildings with public welfare. He gives an example of the faulty distribution of a $4,000 tax gathering: all but $300 goes to the state and national governments for purposes mostly administrative.

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Dr. Tavares laments the distribution of Brazil's population, especially the concentration of 8,000,000 in the province of Sao Paulo as over against 300,000 in the neighboring state of Mato Grosso, which has about twice the area of the North American state of Texas. He sees the growth of São Paulo as justifiable, but pictures her present real estate situation as something "that in some ways reminds one of the crazy Florida days."

And there is that indication that São Paulo, which is "dynamic, earnest and dull," and exotic Rio might some day match their strength to determine national supremacy. It will be modern industry against political careerists, with São Paulo more like the Yankees, many of whom have settled there.

The various Communist parties flourish in Brazil, but Dr. Tavares wisely opposes driving them under-ground and giving them the satisfaction and power that goes with suppression. He admires the progress that Russia has made in wiping out illiteracy, and sees it wiped-out in Brazil with a well-planned, twenty-year campaign. Tropical diseases can also be dealt with effectively, he believes, and the standard of living can be raised by developing the nation's resources.

He sees however, the need of curing "the moral diseases in the national character" which are beyond modern science and advanced equipment. He laments that the Brazilian is an individualist, and in his politics, extremely petty and biased, and jealous of the progress of any other man. He also lacks staying power, going off with great enthusiasm, but soon dropping his task for something that is new. The Brazilian lacks a plan, placing his faith in "We'll fix it somehow."

Dr. Tavares loves his country and its people, and sees in them an enormous potential of faith and enthusiasm: "The most underprivileged of them, illiterate, underfed, stalked by malaria, is first of all a person. His sense of basic human values is unfailing, his attitude toward his fellow-man kind, tolerant, eager." They need a helping hand.

GEORGE STREATOR.

The Lardners and the Laurelwoods. Sheila Kaye-Smith. Harper. $3.00.

IT IS a big help in placing an author to find that he has some unifying theme. The spinner of the endless family chronicle makes it easy. Or the novelist who consistently treats of related social tensions, makes studies of a region or continues to exploit a certain formula which resulted in big sales for one of his books. It is difficult to find such a clue to Sheila Kaye-Smith, whose twenty-five novels have ranged through the centuries. I have not read more than a good half-dozen, but I daresay that nearly all of them manifest a lively interest in people, a sure psychological touch and an underlying concern with the struggle between good and evil. Most of them, too, are laid in the English countryside of our day or earlier centuries. Sussex, primarily, and, as in her latest novel, adjacent Kent.

The evil here is class feeling, manifested in the relationship between the two families who give the novel its title. The contacts of twenty successive summers (between hosts and paying guests) result in the heightening of this class consciousness rather than the reverse. And when an idealistic young Lardner, a farmer, is aroused and then ruthlessly discarded by the belle, Diana Laurelwood, his life is irreparably shattered. That impassioned, short-lived affair serves as the embodiment of the evil of class contempt. But throughout the simple, rather absorbing story there are unhappy incidents, many pretenses, hurt feelings, tensions and embarrassments which in the end flare up into fiery resentment on the part of the social inferiors. Sheila Kaye-Smith's latest is both a full-bodied short novel and an impelling tract.

E. S.

Nicanor of Athens. The Autobiography of An Unknown Citizen. O. F. Grazebrook. Macmillan. $3.00.

GENERAL MARSHALL is reported to have said that Thucydides is the essential book for the understanding of our times. It is easy to see what he meant. Thucydides tells the story of a world divided between a military totalitarian state based on land power and a free democratic state based upon sea power and trade. The democratic state, Athens, was stronger because its free expanding life released greater energies in its citizens but Athens lost because of its factionalism, lack of self-discipline and poor judgment.

Something of the same interest moved Mr. Grazebrook, who as an Englishman has seen the ravaging of European culture in two great wars, to write a historical novel in the form of the autobiography of an Athenian who lived and fought through the Peloponnesian War and saw the ravaging of Athenian civilization. It is a good historical novel—a living, moving, readable tale and, so it seemed to me, a convincing reconstruction of what an Athenian of that age might have felt about his city, his fellow-Athenians, his gods and his own life.

Nicanor was the son of a rich ship-owner and merchant. He had two older brothers, one a knight and professional soldier, the other a pupil of Socrates (whom Nicanor disliked, with all his tribe) and imitator of Alcibiades. Nicanor himself was a hard-headed merchant by temperament, a soldier in the siege of Syracuse, who had the luck to survive to fight again and to watch, with shrewd and rather cynical observation, through all the disastrous course of the war down through to the rebuilding of the Long Walls and the partial revival of Athens. To read his story requires, it may be, at least some slight initial interest or knowledge. But it is a good story.

E. P. RICHARDSON.

Poets and Pundits; A Collection of Essays by Hugh I'Anson Fausset. Yale. $3.50.

MR. FAUSSET'S collection of essays and papers on literary subjects should prove a delight to many readers who have missed the once-familiar belles lettres in the book-lists of our publishers. They will find here, among less rewarding discussions, many illuminating remarks on The Cult of Symbolism, Gerard Manly Hopkins, Eighteenth Century Poetry and Lord Tennyson. Mr. Fausset has a cultivated, liberal mind and a good literary taste formed by critical studies of Keats, Tennyson, Donne, Coleridge, Tolstoy, Cowper and Wordsworth. He writes an easy, popular style characteristic of the London *Times* Literary Supplement, to which he has contributed for the past twenty-seven years. "Poets and Pundits" is unquestionably one of the better assemblies of critical opinion.

But if these essays are for the most part rewarding appraisals of literature, they also tend to reveal some fatal flaws of contemporary critical practice. Since he lacks the critical genius of a Dryden or a Doctor Johnson, it is

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not to be expected that Mr. Fausset's opinions are equally valuable on all phases and periods of literature. This is especially true when the essays are chiefly concerned with the thought rather than the literary style of men like Tolstoy, Kierkegaard, Rilke, Thomas Paine, Rabindranath Tagore, Santayana, and some of the religious books of the Orient. The best one may expect of these essays is superficial summary or, worse still, the display of the reviewer's personal philosophy. Mr. Fausset is aware of the temptation to exploit a book, in the manner of frustrated creative writers, as a means of self-display. This awareness has kept him within reasonable bounds, but it has not saved him altogether.

FRANCIS X. CONNOLLY.

The Life of Christ. Giuseppe Ricciotti. Translated by Alba I. Zizzamia. Bruce. $7.50.

IT WAS in my early seminary days that Abbé Constant Fouard's "Life of Christ" first fleshed out for me the skeletal picture of Christ and His times as portrayed in the Gospel narrative. Not since then have I come upon a "Life of Christ" that combined readability with scholarship to the extent found in this present work of Father Ricciotti. The author, professor of Oriental Christian history at the University of Rome, has brought to his task a rich background of study and writing in matters oriental and scriptural. The translation by Miss Zizzamia, associate professor of Italian at Trinity College, is not scintillating, but it is effective. The result is 675 close-packed pages which contain all that the average person needs to know of New Testament times, places and persons. And there is very little here that the educated Catholic of today does *not* need to know.

Too many of us, listening week after week to the reading of the Sunday Gospel, feel comfortably well-versed in the words and works of the Master. To such a one, there is a jolt of surprise approaching excitement in picking up a book like Ricciotti's "Life of Christ." There opens up a whole new world of science and research, whose solidness and objectivity put to shame the strained and often distorted exegesis of so-called "pious" books.

Particularly good is Father Ricciotti's chapter on the rationalist interpretations of the life of Christ. In 38 pages the author manages to summarize clearly and to weigh dispassionately the various and conflicting theories which have as their common object the naturalization of the Gospels. From 18th-century Reimarus in Germany to 20th-century Guignebert in France, the so-called Higher Critics cling determinedly to their one unalterable principle: if it is supernatural, it didn't happen; the while they airily dismiss their Catholic colleagues as being "dogma-bound."

Three notable advantages are to be found in this latest "Life of Christ," which give it superiority over the two-volume semi-classic of Abbé Fouard: First and most important is the fact that Father Ricciotti has the latest fruits of scriptural research and archeological discoveries at his disposal. The field of Biblical study is neither sterile nor dormant. The author gives us the full fund of facts as they are known today, without undue emphasis on disputed points. Secondly, this volume is garnished with several pages of excellent half-tones which contribute to the vividness of the text. It is so much easier to see the Virgin Mother in the picture of a contemporary Jerusalemite girl, than in an Italian madonna. Finally, the author has prefaced the actual "Life of Christ" with 216 pages of introductory text, in which he treats all incidental matters of scriptural archeology, history, sources, etc.—matters which Abbé Fouard and other authors have distributed through their narrative in the form of confusing and distracting footnotes. The lazy reader may, if he wishes, skip the introduction entirely, and let himself be absorbed in the actual life of Christ, as it moves smoothly and without interruption through some 450 pages.

Two hopes I have: that future editions may be printed on a lighter-weight paper (this volume is heavy to hold), and that the publishers may in time be able to reduce the price for the sake of the wider distribution this book deserves.

LEO J. TRESE.

Rumor in the Forest. Madeleine Couppey. Translated from the French by Marguerite Waldman. Scribners. $2.00.

WHEN the notice on the jacket of a book uses the very words that come to the reviewer's mind, is it a reason for not mentioning them? Madeleine Couppey, indeed, does recall the Kenneth Grahame of "The Wind in the Willows." There is no higher compliment to pay her. But for readers unfamiliar with Grahame's book it may be said that "Rumor in the Forest" is a fable in prose concerning a pigeon, Grey-Flight, a rabbit, Mue, a cat, Siko, and a dog, Rahu. Grey-Flight and Mue run away from the farm to live a life of physical freedom according to the plan of the rabbit who has aroused the pigeon to desire liberty. They meet the cat, Siko, preoccupied solely with his own little self, and the dog, Rahu, a forceful rebel. The four animals strike up a friendship and their growing concern for each other opens for them the door of love through which they become aware of the song of joyful sacrifice sung by the corn, the grape vines, the trees and the whole earth. Mue is the first to see that physical freedom is not everything and that fulfilment comes from giving up one's own life. The four friends, each according to his temperament, all reach this sacrifice in the end.

Throughout the book animals remain animals and the author's sensitivity is delightfully attuned to their reactions. In the description of nature there is much poetry and beauty. Perhaps, finally, Mue probes a trifle too deeply into his philosophical thoughts, yet the book remains full of charm and its perennial tender and heroic message will reach both adults and children. Mention should be made of the excellency of the translations.

CLAIRE HUCHET BISHOP.

A Southern Vanguard. Edited by Allen Tate. Prentice-Hall. $4.50

THIS anthology is composed of essays, stories, and poems submitted in the contest to honor the memory of John Peale Bishop, a West Virginian who became editor of *Vanity Fair* and was later Consultant in Comparative Literature at the Library of Congress. The writers, but not all of the themes, derive from the South. Of several admirable features of the volume, one is the absence of preoccupation with the South—its sorrows, its insistences, even its promise. Here are southerners talking not only about their own region, but about art, literature, politics, pain and pleasure in the world at large. Thus we have a gratifying measure of the critical and creative fac-

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ulties which a culture has produced.

To the extent that the volume consists in southern introspection, the temper is calmer and more detached than has been common. There are echoes of an earlier symposium—"I'll Take My Stand"—with which some of these writers were intimately identified. But the present contributors do not ding-dong at you because, alas, factories now dot southern fields and pollute rural fragrance with the acrid smoke of chimney-stacks. Here and there lingers the notion that the South is peculiar, precious to her sons for her very lapses. The truth may be that any agricultural economy, shattered by war and then invaded by industry, shows about the same behavior.

Louis B. Wright, a South Carolinian now of the Huntington Library, inveighs against myth-makers who have helped bring on the South's dilemma of testifying to democracy while it is terrified by its race tension. Hysterical attack and defense about southern treatment of the Negro have divorced North and South farther than at any time, he thinks, since Reconstruction. He pleads for a return to patient inquiry by men of good will into the means of racial reconciliation. He decries "insistence upon absolute democracy now." Some of his fears are imaginary. Who does insist on absolute democracy now in the South? Most who are attached both to the South and to common justice would like to see South Carolina juries convict cavalcades of confessed lynchers, instead of turning them loose. They demand that the Democratic Party there quit excluding Negroes from the polls. There will be enough left to be accomplished by creative patience.

BROADUS MITCHELL.

To the Bitter End. Hans Bernd Gisevius. Houghton. $4.00.
The Last Days of Hitler. H. R. Trevor-Roper. Macmillan. $3.00.

GISEVIUS, a conservative German bureaucrat, has described in detail a number of Nazi developments and anti-Nazi conspiracies in which he had a part. As many of his associates are dead, it will be difficult to check on numerous conversations and furtively expressed sentiments which he records. Some of his limitations are obvious. Gisevius sees the Nazis largely through the eyes of some civil servants, through the eyes of some generals, and through such questionable figures as Schacht and the Gestapist Nebe, whom he praises. He has been attacked by a leading member of the inmost circle of the resistance, Dr. Rudolf Pechel, editor of the *Deutsche Rundschau.* Allan Dulles, however, is a supporter of Gisevius and Justice Jackson has mistakenly called him a democrat.

From his account emerges the following conclusions. The Nazis achieved a position of power and, thereupon, sought a totality of power. All of German life was eventually coordinated in order to serve this power. Then, the ruthless nihilists in the SA and the SS ran amok. Hitler wanted to check this "permanent revolution" but the totality of power which he had acquired destroyed the possibility of any effective opposition efforts to support Hitler against his own stormy hordes. The civil service fell in line and was corrupted. The same fate enervated the army. There were many Germans who grieved over Nazi excesses and trembled to see police action usurped by the Nazi party. But always Hitler had some pretext for his most shocking actions. Hardly anyone dared to call the swindle by its name and each gravely added something to Hitler's story. They debated and held court—"until in the end they could not admit, without utterly exposing themselves, that they had been the dupes of an impertinent" hoax. Those who were minded to oppose Hitler, either on moral grounds or because he appeared to be frantically bent for desolation, delayed themselves into ineffectiveness by talking about Hitler as a lesser evil, by waiting for the proper time, and by their unwillingness to break an oath of allegiance or to incur the stigma of having dealt the nation a 'stab in the back.' Finally, they desperately recognized that all Germans had become guilty and that they would have to win the war or be ruined. Along the way was the great mass of time servers, from Neurath and Papen to Torgler the Communist. Gisevius devotes much attention to the German generals, who apparently included some gentlemen, Beck and Fritsch, a remarkable number of political fools and a fair sprinkling of knaves. But was not the Fuehrer always unexpectedly successful and did not the Fuehrer, as Blomberg said to Schacht, relieve all Germans of responsibility by taking it upon himself?

Gisevius began to write this book before the war and it was well under way in 1943. It is not a simple product of German defeat. His conclusion about guilt is that not only action makes for guilt and that the Germans should not blame their own faults on the Nuremberg criminals. "Passive resistance, intellectual subservience, or, in religious terms, failure to pray against the evil, may constitute a kind of silent support for authoritarian rule". Of course, such guilt does not supply a pretext for punitive action. Gisevius believes that after 1938 foreign assistance was necessary for the success of German efforts against the Nazis. But unlike some earlier writers he insists that it was the responsibility of the Germans to act. He shows that Chamberlain's surrender at Munich saved Hitler from a formidable plot at home and that Chamberlain was fully aware of it. Vansittart was also informed about the German resistance, although his writings betray no such knowledge.

"To the Bitter End" recreates with painful intensity the moods of various periods. Gisevius has a dramatic but not always discriminating sense of the possible courses of action before an important decision or event. He sees that his prefered saviors, for example, the Stahlhelm in 1934, were fragile, though pompous, reeds. Indeed, the whole German social structure was weak and crumbling, as is evidenced by the surrender of so many organizations in the early "Coordination" (Gleichschaltung) period (1933). The account of Hitler's first years of power reflects the conservative bureaucrat's belief that the times were not too abnormal and completely ignores such evidence as Rauschning's "Voice of Destruction." His story of the putsch (July 20, 1944) reveals that conspiracy to have been wretchedly prepared and inanely executed. It is wryly amusing to note that Stauffenberg, the activist of the putsch, insisted that Gisevius's book, which was so critical of the army, would have to be banned in post-putsch Germany.

"The Last Days of Hitler" is a convincing, official British account of Hitler's death. Trevor-Roper's critical method in dealing with his sources is painstaking. But the work is poor in its general judgments. It is surprisingly anti-Catholic and anti-Jesuit. Goebbels, unwarrantedly described as the product of Jesuit education, is interpreted in contradictory fashion—he is a Latin and, therefore,

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clear and logical, he is a Latin and, therefore, incapable of the teutonic honesty of the slogan "Blood, Sweat and Tears". Trevor-Roper notes with surprise, as Gisevius does more amply, that there was no order and unity in the Nazi Reich. Power by itself is not a principle of order. "The Last Days of Hitler" has all the narcotic excitement of the suspense thriller. The violent end comes but it is not a tragedy and there is no catharsis. Gisevius's book presents the very stuff of human nature under tyranny. Unfortunately, it will not have the wide circulation of "The Last Days of Hitler."

M. A. FITZSIMONS.

The Land and People of Canada. Frances Aileen Ross. Lippincott. $2.50.

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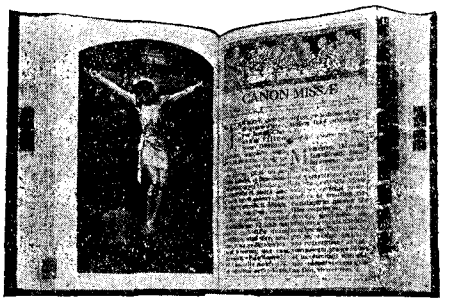

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The Church Year

A STUDY originally written and published in 1938 at the Abbey of Clervaux, Luxemburg, by the Reverend Bernard Strasser, O.S.B., has now been translated and published in this country ("With Christ Through the Year." Bruce. $3.75.) Here are a few significant excerpts:

On the Church year in general: "The Church year is not primarily a commemoration of the history of our redemption, a recalling of the past. Nor is it a mere anticipation of the joys of our future life in eternity. Rather, the liturgical year is the opportune *present*. It is the day on which, as Our Lord says, we are to work out our salvation (John 9:4), the grace-laden present which alone belongs to us since the past is irrevocably gone and the future quite uncertain. Therefore, in the ecclesiastical year, the Church . . . re-presents these acts and events to us so that they may be a means of nourishment to our supernatural life, a means whereby the life of grace may develop and be strengthened in the soul of each individual member of the Mystical Body of Christ . . .

The Church's Autumn, from the Easter Cycle: "On the last Sundays of the Church year which now follow, the Church repeatedly thinks of and warns about the autumn of human life. She reminds us of the four last things: death, judgment, heaven and hell. Before everything else, one thought was prevalent in the consciousness of the early Christians. It was the second coming, the *Parousia,* of Jesus Christ as judge of the world. For this reason the liturgy reminds us in these last weeks to think of death and judgment, not, however, in fear and anxiety, but with a strong and noble Christian hope, with a holy confidence in the eternal reward that the Lord God will give to all those who have faithfully served Him . . .

The feasts of martyrs, from the Sanctoral Cycle: "Veneration of the saints began with the Martyrs, victorious champions and heroes of the Church. Every year on the anniversary of the death of a martyr, Holy Mass is celebrated over his grave. The custom soon arose of having a eulogy or sermon delivered, at this Mass, which recounted the main facts of the life and death of the respective martyr. This usually followed the Gospel. Through these eulogies (a large number are still extant) runs the theme that every Christian should strive always to become . . . an 'other Christ' as did those faithful men, women and children who suffered persecution and martyrdom for love of Christ and His Church . . .

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